



## Michael Strong, MD ALS Society of (Windsor) Essex County Endowment in Support of Students in ALS Research

### Program Update

Because of the pandemic, we were unable to run the lab at full capacity for the last two years and indeed worked in shifts to keep our research programs intact. Because of this, I did not consider it either safe or academically rewarding for a student to join us for either summer.

However, given that we have been able to return to full capacity as of September 1st, we recruited a terrific 3rd year student from Western's Integrated Science program. This student, Maegha Subramaniam, has already distinguished herself in the lab, working upwards of 14 to 18 hours per week directly on the project focused on understanding the dementia of ALS. In her previous summer placements, she had gained experience at the Columbia University Medical Centre in Alzheimer's Disease and thus was already equipped with an understanding of neurodegeneration. In the upcoming year, Meg will work closely with Neil Donison, a PhD student who began in our lab as a summer student supported through the ALS Society of (Windsor) Essex County. Neil had worked closely with Matt Hintermeyer, who also started as a student supported by the Society and then entered a master's program with us studying ALS.

The program is attracting incredibly bright young scholars who then get to understand ALS research and decide to undertake graduate training with us - exactly what the program was designed to do in building the next generation of researchers in ALS.

As Meg's work evolves, she will be learning the techniques of immunohistochemistry which will allow her to observe the changes in individual neurons affected by ALS and in this case, an experimental of the dementia associate with ALS. She will move on to learn the techniques of

*This specific program is working as designed in that it attracts bright young scholars to join a lab working specifically on the cause of ALS. There is no other funding available to support this kind of initiative and thus the generosity of the donors (collectively the Society) is directly supporting the future of ALS research.*

**-Michael Strong, MD**

# Michael Strong, MD

## ALS Society of (Windsor) Essex County Endowment in Support of Students in ALS Research

isolating specific proteins that are damaged in ALS, and then observing how these are altered and more importantly, whether we can prevent these alterations. Hence, the impact will be to help us more thoroughly understand why some patients with ALS develop a dementia and how we can develop strategies to prevent it.

### **Impact of Your Donations**

The members of the ALS Society of (Windsor) Essex County have been tireless supporters of our research, providing absolutely critical funding to support our program and the people within it. Without their support, extending to the early 1990's in funding the first patient registry for ALS across Canada through to supporting individual students and research projects, our advances in understanding many of the fundamental processes at play in ALS would have been significantly delayed.

Meg, Neil, and Matt and those before them would never have had the chance to experience working on understanding the underlying cause of ALS without this support. By experiencing this, both Matt and Neil made the decision to focus more formally on ALS research as graduate students. My hope is that Meg will do the same.